



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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ICE POSTS RECORD YEAR IN COMBATING ILLEGAL DRUG TRADE ***-- Leaders of Major Drug Cartels Brought to U.S. for Trial; Record Drug Seizures Mark 2004--***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Michael J. Garcia, the Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), today announced that ICE agents at home and abroad posted a record year in their efforts to combat the illegal drug trade.

During 2004, ICE investigations yielded unprecedented results in targeting and dismantling some of the world's largest drug trafficking organizations. ICE agents were also involved in the seizure of record amounts of illegal drugs and, working with authorities overseas, saw a record number of ICE drug/money laundering defendants extradited to the United States to stand trial.

"In 2004, ICE achieved unprecedented success in targeting and bringing to justice some of the most powerful drug figures in the world, thanks to extensive collaboration with law enforcement partners at home and abroad," said ICE Assistant Secretary Garcia. "Criminal organizations that exploit vulnerabilities in our nation's borders to poison America with drugs pose a serious homeland security threat. Targeting and dismantling these global drug syndicates is a key priority for ICE."

Some of the anti-drug milestones achieved by ICE in 2004 include:

- **Unprecedented Success Against the Cali Cartel** -- A lengthy ICE investigation in Miami led to the indictment of the leaders of the Cali Cartel and their associates, resulting in numerous arrests and, in December 2004, the extradition of the highest-ranking drug kingpin to ever face trial in the United States. Last month, Colombian authorities extradited the founder of the Cali Cartel, Gilberto Rodriguez-Orejuela, to face charges in the United States. He made his initial court appearance in Miami, Florida, on December 6, 2004. Gilberto's brother and Cali Cartel co-founder, Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela, is in Colombian custody pending extradition on ICE charges. The Rodriguez-Orejuela brothers and several other cartel members are charged in Miami with conspiracy to import cocaine, conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, and conspiracy to launder money. The indictment seeks the forfeiture of \$2.1 billion. During the 1990s, the Cali Cartel was estimated to be responsible for roughly 80 percent of the cocaine shipped to the United States.

- **Unprecedented Success Against the Norte Valle Cartel** -- A lengthy ICE drug money laundering investigation in New York led to the indictment and capture in 2004 of several leaders of Colombia's Norte Valle Cartel, which is estimated to export between 30 and 50 percent of the cocaine entering the United States. One top leader of the cartel, Arcangel de Jesus Henao-Montoya, was arrested in Panama in January 2004 and expelled to ICE custody in New York. Henao-Montoya currently awaits trial in New York, where he is charged with drug and money laundering violations in connection with export of more than 1.2 million pounds of cocaine to the United States since 1990. Henao-Montoya's second-in-command, Jose Dagoberto Florez-Rios, was arrested last week in Colombia as a result of a joint operation by Colombian authorities and ICE agents. Another top leader of the Norte Valle Cartel, Luis Hernando-Gomez-Bustamante, was detained in Cuba in July 2004.
- **Unprecedented Number of Extraditions** -- Thanks to the efforts of the Colombian government and the ICE Attaché Office in Bogotá, Colombia, at least 37 ICE drug and money laundering defendants were extradited from Colombia to the United States in 2004, more than in any year in history. In 2003, a total of 21 ICE defendants were extradited from Colombia. Another 26 ICE defendants are currently pending approval from the Colombian government for extradition. The ICE Attaché Office in Colombia has closely coordinated all these efforts with the Colombian National Police, the U.S. Justice Department, and the U.S. State Department. Operating out of the U.S. Embassy in Colombia, the ICE Attaché Office consists of ICE special agents who work cooperatively with Colombian authorities and with domestic ICE offices to combat a variety of crimes.
- **Unprecedented Drug Seizures** -- During Fiscal Year 2004, ICE was involved with other federal agencies in the seizure of more than 3.1 million pounds of illegal drugs, including the seizure of roughly 340,000 pounds of cocaine and 2.6 million pounds of marijuana. These figures represent a 63 percent increase over the drug seizure statistics in Fiscal Year 2003, when ICE was involved in the seizure of approximately 1.9 million pounds of illegal drugs, including roughly 226,000 pounds of cocaine and 1.5 million pounds of marijuana.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.